

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF BARBARA LACEN KELLER

HON. TROY A. CARTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 26, 2023

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of New Orleans culture bearer and activist, Barbara Lacen Keller who passed away following a brief illness at the age of 76. New Orleans has lost one of its greatest champions of culture. Barbara was always leading the fight for the rights of our musicians and culture bearers. She left a legacy worthy to be celebrated and remembered for generations to come. She was also involved in politics, to improve the lives of people in New Orleans and across the country. For many years she worked for the City of New Orleans, as the Director of Constituent Services for Council District B Councilwoman Stacey Head, and later in Mayor LaToya Cantrell's Office of Cultural Economy, where she retired in 2020. She was fondly nicknamed "the Mayor of Central City", for all her work in that neighborhood. In 2012 she proudly served as a Barack Obama delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, NC. She was a Mellon Community Fellow at Tulane University, mentoring graduate students in community relations.

Barbara was a very active figure in New Orleans' cultural community, including serving on the boards for the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans and the Dryades YMCA, where she was currently serving as President of the Board of Dryades YMCA, New Orleans, Louisiana, leading the transition and operational restructuring of 115-year-old community anchor organization. She was an original member of the Lady Buckjumpers, and a founding member of the New Orleans Social Aid & Pleasure Club Task Force. Barbara was a charter member of the Femme Fatale Mardi Gras krewe, serving as one of the first float captains, and was currently serving as chaplain.

She had been a valued member of the Board of Directors of WWOZ since 2021 where she will be remembered as a Guardian Angel overlooking the Guardians of the Groove, advocating for culture bearers and musicians in our city; and of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation, where she was elected to the Advisory Council in 2016, and onto the Board of the Foundation in 2019, serving as Chair of the Advocacy and Equity Committee and its Gala Committee.

Barbara's mother was Augustine "Miss Teen" Germaine Lewis, who in the 1940s was the only Spy Girl Mardi Gras Indian in New Orleans. In the 1950s, Barbara herself masked as the Little Queen of the Cheyenne tribe.

Barbara was raised on Villere Street in Tremé, and attended Joseph A. Craig Elementary School, Andrew J. Bell Junior High School, and Joseph S. Clark Sr. High School,

followed by Southern University at New Orleans. She was also a proud honorary member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Barbara's Honors, Awards and Appointments are beyond numerous to mention them all.

Other civic involvement included:

Israelite Baptist Church, Pastor Support & Youth Ministries, Governmental Liaison, Mass Choir

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Member

Black Organization for Leadership Development, Member

Great Expectations Inc., Past Board Member and Treasurer

City of New Orleans Enterprise Congress, Member

National Council of Negro Women, Member
New Orleans Social Aid and Pleasure Club Task Force, Founder

Central City Partnership, Co-Founder and Chairperson

Café Reconcile, New Orleans Board of Directors, Past Chair

New Orleans Council on Aging, Board of Directors

Gathering of the Sisters, Founder

City of New Orleans, Master Plan Advisory Committee, Districts 25 & 26, Subcommittee Chairperson

Armstrong Family Services, Board of Directors, Past Chair

Urban League, Member

Independent Women's Organization, Membership & Endorsement Committees

Orleans Parish Democratic Executive Committee, Member

Democratic State Central Committee, District 103, Member

National Slave Ship Museum, Vice Chair

Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., Member

Original New Orleans Lady Buck Jumpers, Member

American Heart Association, Go Red Women Luncheon, 2011 Co-Chair

Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday Commission, Co-Chair

Tremé/7th Ward Cultural District, Sponsorship Coordinator, Festival Co-Producer

Preservation Resource Committee, Board of Directors, Chair of Multicultural Heritage Committee, Chair

The "Lacen" part of her name came from her marriage to Anthony "Tuba Fats" Lacen, one of New Orleans' most famous musicians, who was also Wild Man of the Wild Magnolias Mardi Gras Indian Tribe. Their August 1980 wedding in Armstrong Park was the first wedding to take place in the park. Tuba Fats passed in 2004.

Barbara's 1 son, Gene Bentley predeceased her in November of 2022. She is survived by the gems of her eyes, 3 daughters—Dawn Bentley-Johnson, Kelly Bentley Dixon and Cantina Rankins; 4 beautiful grandchildren—Zihara Rankins, Michael Brooks, Jr., Jelani Robinson, and Alicia Green; and 1 adorable great-grandchild.

I am humbled to have personally known such a great culture bearer and fighter for all, who has done so much to improve the lives of countless residents across my district. So many people's lives are enriched because of the love and passion she expressed in touching them along the way. While the grieving

process never truly ends, I pray that the day will come when her memory brings a smile to her family and friends' faces before it brings a tear to their eyes.

REMEMBERING LEROY ELFMAN

HON. TOM EMMER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 26, 2023

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of LeRoy Edwin Elfmann, who passed away on January 6th of this year.

From humble beginnings on a dairy farm in Maple Lake, Minnesota, LeRoy set out to live a life of service. After graduating from Maple Lake High School in 1968, he enlisted in the United States Army. LeRoy served in the Army for more than 20 years, and his service took him all over the world. After serving his country on deployment in Guam, Cambodia, Hungary, and Finland, he was honorably discharged after rising to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 3.

However, LeRoy's service to his country did not end after his military career did. After more than 20 years in the armed forces, LeRoy joined the Defense Intelligence Agency. While there, he served as a trusted representative of the United States, advocating for our great nation around the world on intelligence and security concerns.

LeRoy was involved in many high-profile intelligence operations, including the capture of Ana Montes, a spy who infiltrated the Defense Intelligence Agency and spied on behalf of the Cuban government for 17 years. With LeRoy's help, Ms. Montes was arrested in September of 2001 and charged with conspiracy to commit espionage. She eventually pled guilty and was sentenced to a 25-year prison term. In recognition of his more than 36 years of service to the agency, LeRoy was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Director of National Intelligence.

His distinguished career with the Defense Intelligence Agency took him to more than 67 countries. During one of these trips, he met his beloved wife, Mary. They were married in Singapore, where they met, in February 1977.

Between overseas trips, the couple made their home in Arlington, Virginia until their retirement in 2011. During retirement, Mary and LeRoy were heavily involved in their community and stayed active through their membership in a square-dancing club in Monticello, the County Line Squares. Together, they participated in many square-dancing events in Minnesota and attended numerous square-dancing conventions around the United States. LeRoy also held multiple leadership positions in the state-wide organization, Square Dance Minnesota.

When they weren't square dancing or traveling together, Mary and LeRoy enjoyed spending time on the farm, planting and harvesting crops with their nephews. LeRoy also

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